

## **Basic Facts about Tabun (GA)**

### **Background**

- ▼ Tabun (GA) was originally developed in Germany in 1936, as an insecticide.
- ▼ Tabun (GA) is a nerve agent. A nerve agent is a compound that is designed to kill people by binding up a compound known as acetylcholinesterase (the body's off switch), this compound is essential for removing acetylcholine, the body's voluntary muscle and gland "on switch." With reduced or no acetylcholinesterase, the glands and voluntary muscles continue to be stimulated by the acetylcholine; eventually the muscles tire and can no longer sustain breathing functions.

### **Risk**

- ▼ Tabun is lethal. It can enter the body by inhalation, ingestion, through the eyes, and to a lesser extent through the skin.
- ▼ Tabun is persistent, based on amount dispersed and weather. Heavily splashed liquid persists one to two days under average weather conditions. It evaporates about 20 times more slowly than water. It persists about one day at 20 C and about six days at 5 C. Tabun persists twice as long in sea water.

### **Symptoms**

- ▼ Symptoms may appear in varying order based on route of exposure (the way it entered the body), but commonly noted symptoms include:
  - Runny nose
  - Watery eyes
  - Drooling and excessive sweating
  - Tightness of the chest
  - Difficulty in breathing
  - Dimness of vision (pupils may become pinpointed)
  - Nausea
  - Vomiting, cramps, and loss of bladder/bowel control
  - Twitching, jerking, and staggering
  - Headache, confusion, drowsiness, coma, and convulsions

### **Decontamination**

- ▼ Skin: Remove contaminated clothing and wash skin with large amounts of soap and water or

5% liquid household bleach. Rinse well with water.

- ▼ If you believe that you have gotten Tabun in your eyes, immediately flush your eyes with water for 10 - 15 minutes.
- ▼ If you believe that you have eaten or drank something with Tabun on it or in it, do not induce vomiting.

### **Treatment**

- ▼ If you believe that you have been exposed to Tabun, you first should remove the agent from the skin and call 911. Ambulance teams and hospitals in many communities are stocking the antidotes.